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LETTER DATED 10 JULY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AFGHANISTAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the letter by Mr. Alem Razm, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, dated 9 July 1998, which is addressed to you.

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter were circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dr. A. G. Ravan FARHÂDI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 9 July 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, I would like to acknowledge your tireless endeavours for bringing peace to war-ravaged Afghanistan.

As articulately stated by Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan during his meeting with you in New York on 9 June 1998, my Government attaches great importance to the central role of the United Nations in the peace process in Afghanistan.

Consistent with this, taking a fervent interest in the peace-making activities of Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi and the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA), my Government has studied your report on Afghanistan of 19 June 1998 (A/52/957-S/1998/532). We agree fully with you on many of the elements contained in the report.

However, on the efforts of neighbouring Pakistan presumably aiming to return peace to Afghanistan, the observations by Pakistan's Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Gohar Ayub Khan, in an interview in the Egyptian paper Al-Ahram of 30 June 1998, clearly exhibit an inconsistent malicious trend on the part of the military policy in that country towards Afghanistan.

Replying to a question in the above-mentioned interview, the Pakistani Minister for Foreign Affairs said, "both President Burhanuddin Rabbani and Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Massoud belong to the Tajik minority, which constitutes 13 per cent of the population in Afghanistan. Mr. Karim Khalili, the leader of the Wahdat party, belongs to the Hazars minority that forms 10 per cent, and General Dostum belongs to the Uzbek minority, which constitutes 7 per cent of Afghanistan's population".

He further maintained that it is a fact that Pakistan, in the event of confronting India, "is in need of a strategic depth". "We always", Mr. Gohar Ayub admitted, "believe that the presence of a friendly Government in Kabul would suffice in providing such a strategic depth for us". He further continued "that two Provinces of Pakistan, which are adjacent to Afghanistan, are populated by the Pashtuns, an ethnic group that is a major one in Pakistan. This fact reveals our responsibilities and priorities in Afghanistan", the Pakistani Minister for Foreign Affairs, himself an ethnic Pashtun, concluded.

For the sake of the record and to shed light on the misconception by Mr. Gohar Ayub Khan of Pakistan, I should like to take this opportunity to state that his need of inventing erroneous and grotesque statistical data on the composition of ethnic groups or percentages in Afghanistan and also on the percentage of Taliban-held territory stems from hegemonic designs. While his acclaimed notion, widely rejected by experts on Afghanistan alludes to the misconception that the Taliban, in this case the Pashtuns, embody 60 per cent of the entire Afghan population, the reality remains that no ethnic group in

Afghanistan comprises the majority and that no ethnic group in Afghanistan represents more than 37 per cent of the population.

The remarks of the Pakistani Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Gohar Ayub Khan, grotesquely elaborate on the ethnic configuration in Afghanistan and, beyond that, present a caricature of the percentages of the actual statistics of the ethnic composition of the country, admittedly aimed at the incitement of racial hegemony and also of racial hatred among the multi-ethnic people of Afghanistan. In fact, Mr. Gohar Ayub Khan intends to prove that Pakistan has to bank on the Taliban to transform Afghanistan into a country of "strategic depth" serving Pakistan. The expressions indeed reveal the bitter reality that, in Pakistan today, a genuine State change of policy for peace towards Afghanistan remains a dashed hope for the ruling civilian Government.

Considering the statements by Mr. Ayub Khan irresponsible and menacing, I would like to reiterate that the Islamic State of Afghanistan remains convinced that these statements are not in line with the genuine aspirations of both the Government and of the people of Pakistan.

We firmly believe that exploring ways and means for building confidence and promoting mutual trust between the two fraternal countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan would rightfully serve the legitimate interests of both countries, regional stability and the realization of economic opportunities.

(Signed) Mohammad'Âlem RAZM
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Islamic State of Afghanistan